NOTES FROM THE VOID

The A Void Collective Fanzine

FREE

Issue Three, September 2025

cover photo: Adam H

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OUR MANIFESTO

We believe that no one should be excluded from performing their music in public because of their neurotype, disability, age, or inexperience. We believe that someone playing their first gig is as valuable as someone playing their thousandth, and that the age of a performer doesn't have any bearing on how good they are or whether they should be given good gigs.

We understand that some neurotypes and mental health conditions make it harder for musicians to find opportunities, that the way some of us are wired makes networking an impossible task, and that being unable to harass promoters for shows means the gigs don't come.

We understand that some music is deemed too 'weird' to be given good gigs by some promoters, and that's wrong. Just because a musician is making something not classed as 'normal' doesn't mean they should be relegated to the outer edges of open mic nights - they should be on the bills at proper gigs, with their name on the poster.

We are a group of musicians from various bands and with different skills. Some of us are awful at networking, but some of us are amazing at it. Our skills complement one another, and we make decisions on how to proceed collectively. We aim for full inclusivity, to give valuable shows to the people who are ignored by the people who are currently putting on the 'big gigs'.

We stand against ageism, ableism, exclusion of any kind, and favouritism. We stand for the overlooked and marginalised.

We want to make each gig valuable for the acts playing, something that will be more long-lasting for them than just another half hour on a stage. We video wherever we can, get photos taken, and run this zine. We have an etiquette guide that we ask everyone to abide by, a list of things that make the shows stress-free. Once the gig has ended, we can do things for the acts who have performed, whether it's recording them cheaply (or even free), helping with instrument repairs, or enabling them to go and do what we do elsewhere, we try to keep adding value to their experience.

Put simply, we want to be what we think should already exist, and we feel there's a void.

OPINION: Remember Pay to Play? It's back! In Pog form!*

We've all seen them, increasingly regularly, events on Facebook headed 'London Promoter presents London Venue!'. Usually, there's a generic stock photo of a band, artfully lit and playing to an adoring, smiling crowd and no actual acts named. What are these events?

Sadly, it appears they're the latest ugly evolution of the old pay to play scam that some unscrupulous venues ran in the 80s. Back then, some venues would ask the bands to pay them to perform, keeping all of the ticket money as well. It was 'good exposure', you see! Bands fell for it, and 'promoters' (who did no promotion) chuckled as the quids rolled in. The bands did literally all the work, flogging tickets they'd see no return on, sometimes even being given posters to put up. They'd then turn up at the venue and find a spectacularly mis-matched bill, with a ska band rubbing shoulders with a metal act (probably called Grotesk Analation) with a folk duo top of the bill because they'd sold the most tickets.

In short, the system was crap, and the Musicians Union campaigned against it. Bands wised up, said 'no' to these schemes (well, mostly. Shit bands with names like Out Go The Lights or Lambent Slumber were desperate enough to keep the scam alive in some holdout venues).

And now it's back, but with a glossy 21st Century spin and social media adverts for gigs at places like the Moustache Bar, The Beehive, or the Amersham Arms that initially don't mention any of the acts. It's worth noting the venues aren't to blame for what the people who hire them choose to do.

The London musician Lola Wild fell for one of these and ended up with her face on the poster and name top billing. Great, yeah? Not so much. On the night it emerged that one of the other acts had now sold more tickets, and they were moved up the bill. Understandably furious that the gig had been heavily pushed in the final weeks as her headliner, Lola unleashed on the promoter in an Instagram video that went semi-viral before it was pulled down (presumably due to pressure from the shit promoter, which is why we're not naming them here).

The flip side is, if a band doesn't sell enough tickets, they get kicked off the bill, with no refunds available to their fans due to the gig going ahead.

These 'promoters' are banking on bands not realising that there's a different route available to them if they're struggling to get gigs. Rather than bash their heads against the brick wall of overwhelmed proper promoters who are often too swamped with requests to even respond to them, bands should simply book the venue themselves. No venue is going to be unhappy if you pay the booking fee (different from pay to play, you're paying for the engineer etc) and then pull some people in. Do you think Phil at the Black Prince is going to be pissed off if a previously unused back room is suddenly hosting a gig? No, that room would have generated no income for the pub without that gig going on, so it's a no brainer.

Get together with some other bands, promote the show yourselves, and see if you can make it work. Also, be honest with yourselves: are you playing one of these rip-off London shows because you have fans there, or are you doing it so you can say you've played in London? If you can't pull enough people on your own in your home town to avoid a loss, then why do you think London is going to be any different? Not everyone can be like thistle., who genuinely pull an audience when they go down to London, ULV would be playing to an empty room (which is why they regularly say they'd never play in London).

DIY is way more fun than P2P.

**not literally, but we wanted to shoehorn a Simpsons reference in*

Why **Performing Room** Matters

Performing Room isn't just a charity—it's a creative supernova blazing at the heart of Northampton, where the impossible becomes reality and forgotten voices rise with unstoppable force.

Since its founding in 2001, this pioneering sanctuary has redefined what inclusion, healing, and human connection can look like—transforming lives through the raw power of live music, heritage, imagination, and care.

It's revolutionary, visionary and unforgettably human.

After a decade of groundbreaking work in Northampton's Boot and Shoe Quarter, Performing Room stepped boldly into a new era—reviving the iconic 9 Guildhall Road. Once a grand Victorian hotel built in 1872, this historic landmark has been transformed into a flagship for inclusive arts.

Today, the building hums with harmony. Its walls echo with creativity. Its air shimmers with colour. What was once forgotten is now a beacon of belonging—a place where sound, story, and soul collide in a joyful celebration of community, healing, and infinite possibility.

Inside, lives are reborn. Children, young people and adults—many living with SEND, mental health challenges, autism, anxiety, trauma, learning or physical difficulties, or social isolation—enter a space where creativity isn't therapy. It's transcendence.

At the heart of it all is Making Music Making Friends, the charity's flagship programme: a dazzling fusion of rhythm, joy, and rediscovery. Here, no one is left behind, and everyone is empowered to thrive.

No auditions. No clipboards. No boxes to tick. Only open arms, open minds, and open hearts.

"We don't ask people to change to fit the world," says founder Janan Fifield. "We build a space where the world changes to make room for them."

Fuelled by an extraordinary team of volunteers with fire in their souls, Performing Room radiates warmth, hope, and fierce creativity. Their devotion is the secret ingredient—amplifying every beat, every lyric, every life set free.

Even passers-by can feel its pull. The windows sing. The doors breathe welcome. There's a tangible atmosphere of magic and meaning that reaches you before you ever step inside.

In 2025, Performing Room's legacy was honoured by the Crown, with an invitation to Buckingham Palace in recognition of its life-changing work. A celebration not of fame or fortune—but of music, trust, and love.

Next Event: A Spectacle of Belonging

Saturday 30th August 2025
Making Music Making Friends Event
A soul-lifting celebration of sound, storytelling, and community connection—in partnership with mental health charity The Lowdown.
Live music. Spoken word. Workshops. Games. Inclusive.

Want to Find Out More?

Whether you're an individual, carer, artist, school, or partner organisation, if you're curious about joining, collaborating, or creating, Performing Room would love to hear from you.
hello@performingroom.org
www.performingroom.org

Performing Room isn't just a space—it's a sensation. An atmosphere. An experience. A rising anthem.
And once you've felt it, you're part of it forever.

Bio-Exile remove the sludge

We sat down for a chat with **Bio-Exile** vocalist/bassist, **Kieran Simons**.

A Void: Who are Bio-Exile? When did you form, and what brought you together?

Kieran: Bio-Exile are an alternative rock band mostly from Rushden and Higham with one member from Corby. The project started in February 2024 as my solo project and initially sounded more industrial however, as a group we formed in July 2024 as I called on my friend Alex to play some guitar, and we were put in touch with our drummer Jake who asked if his friend Robert could join too, we played our first show in February 2025.

A Void: What do you think of the Northampton music scene?

Kieran: We have played almost all of our shows in Northampton because it's locally the place with the best scene, and it has some really cool smaller venues. We've got quite lucky with a lot of the support slots we've been given, and it's always been a good atmosphere.

A Void: Who is influencing you musically? Going by your first two singles, you seem to be part of the resurgence in bands that sing rather than scream. Is this conscious?

Kieran: Quite a few influences. A lot of our stuff takes from, like, a standard hard rock place. We have quite a few punk-inspired songs too; we are sort of like a mix of Pearl Jam and Sum 41. A lot of people have said we sound a little more old school than the other bands on the scene we've played with, which is probably in part because both guitarists like to play a lot of solos and also just the way I sing things. In terms of screaming, there is one song that has a half scream, but it's not something that was ever really in my skill set. I have quite a clean voice, and I've kind of just played to my strengths.

A Void: What's your proudest moment to date?

Kieran: Either playing in London or opening for the Jins at the Lab, both were the culmination of a lot of effort and provided us with a boost in both followers and morale.

A Void: Is there anything you wish you hadn't done as a band?

Kieran: I wish we had maybe tried to get a few more shows in and maybe tried to get out there a bit earlier than we did initially, because it meant we have had a few gaps where we haven't had many live dates, it has meant we could get in the studio, though.

A Void: Who else locally is making you pay attention?

Kieran: Wishing Wolf played a great set at the Black Prince when we played with them, and they were cool guys too.

A Void: Lastly, what's next for the band?

Kieran: We have our next single recorded, but we just need to work on the music video. Stay tuned!

https://www.instagram.com/bioexileband

Meet **Element Unchained**

How did the band form?
Started out with Alex (Drums) and John (Guitar) a few years ago playing in a rehearsal studio. Then we got Richard (Bass) a year later and have been slowly working on music & gigs ever since. Playing at Brockley Studios, Pirate Studios Greenwich and more recently Audio Works Northampton.

Who are you influenced by?
A lot. Alice in Chains, Alter Bridge, Disturbed, Type O Negative, Shinedown, Slash, Rage Against The Machine

What's the best thing you've done to date?
Our second-to-last gig at the Amersham Arms in May. We had so many people there and there was such a great video that night!

What's coming up next?
To mix our EP, so it can be released into the world.

Which other bands are you enjoying at the moment?
Tool, Linkin Park, The Warning, Black Orchid Empire, Dear Mother, Halestorm

https://www.instagram.com/elementunchained/

Well intentioned with **Benign Plausibility**

"Our experience of the Northampton scene has always been great. There was always a sense of community and some awesome musicians and bands. We have been away from the local scene for a number of years due to life and family commitments but we are excited to be back in action.

We have played together in some form or other our whole lives. This band has been in the making for a few years through the ups and downs of life, and we are looking forward to unleashing what we have.

Our influences are as diverse as we are. Collectively, we are into metal, hardcore, stoner rock, punk rock and all the flavours encompassed within that.

We recently recorded a few tracks at premier studios towards our first EP, and we have plans to lay down the remaining tracks soon and get to work releasing it."

https://benignplausibility.bandcamp.com/

When Alex Botten, a 30 year veteran of a thousand bands, named his latest project, he can't have imagined the difficulty that promoters, journalists and local DJs would have in getting it right. Or maybe he did and that was the point?

ÜLV. Oool-v. Uhl-v. U.L.V. ÜLV as in wolves. Uniform-Lima-Victor...the list goes on, and no doubt the confusion will persist, but for me those three letters combined with the three members of the band (drum machines count) offer a satisfying synergy. The rule of three! The magic number! But what's in a name, anyway?

I first saw ÜLV last year at the Garibaldi in Northampton and was instantly smitten by Alex's white Jazzmaster. I'm ashamed to say my memories of bassist Steve are a bit foggy on this particular outing. I remember staring at him on the Gari's tiny, bouncy stage and thinking he would look equally at home hanging out with Parker and Brett on the engineering deck of the Nostromo. Once I had put aside such shallow and ridiculous thoughts I became an instant fan. For me they were the best kind of noise rock; a textured, layered guitar sound underpinned by an aggressively busy yet melodic bass and propelled by a thudding drum machine. They were definitely not shoegaze, always a reductive term best levelled at every band who sprang up in the wake of My Bloody Valentine and missed the point. Like MBV, ÜLV offer a more nuanced take on sonic mayhem; both bands helmed by a mad scientist, replacing chemical formulae with chains of guitar effects and the laboratory for the studio/stage. The resulting sound becomes much more considered, interpretive and collaborative as the brain attempts to make sense of all these competing frequencies. We hear things in the chaos; strange melodies, shrieks of feedback and sometimes even the song as intended. This is not to say that ÜLV don't have songs. You only have to hear '50 Something Goth' or the recent 'Your Guitar's Too High' and 'La Jetée' to understand that Alex can write a hit.

But back to the live experience - I've never got the appeal of being in a crowd at a gig; to be pressed in on all sides by sweating humanity is my idea of Hell, but to be immersed in a sea of noise and battered by sheer volume is something I genuinely love. This is what I get from an ÜLV gig on a good day. Even on a bad day things can be interesting. Their most recent return to the Garibaldi saw the band's set fall apart after 3 songs amid a litany of problems, some personal, some external. For the band it was a painful experience but for those of us watching it was a genuine punk rock moment. Cutting a set short by 20 minutes had way more impact than a thousand bands getting on the bar at the Gari or wandering into the crowd to play a solo. The final song, when it all came together was like a hymn of violence, frustration and anger channelled through a PA system. It was that good. Thankfully, no one was hurt and ÜLV are doing well.

You can catch them live at the Garibaldi Hotel on September 12th alongside The Dirt, Piss Shivers and Sickrose, via Picky New. Don't miss out!

ÜLV at First Sight

Andrew Slack from Joy Disposal Unit on the ÜLV live experience

https://linktr.ee/ulv_with_an_umlaut

We talked to Phil Moore at the

Black Prince

How did you end up being the general manager of the Prince?
By standing around long enough! I came on board the good ship Prince in 2019 as Events Manager after a few gigs I'd put on had impressed. So it's a case of success begets more responsibilities down the line, really.

There's no denying that the situation for pubs and venues up and down the country isn't great. How's the current climate hitting you?
Wholesale drinks costs and energy prices are so high now, and the pressure is on for people to show up and spend money with you. You can no longer get away with nights with ten punters - you'd be closed within months if you think you can. Luckily over time I've learned to live with pragmatism as an art-form in itself, and roll with it.

Pubs are increasingly putting on tribute and cover acts, I was initially against this, but I'm starting to realise these are keeping the lights on for some venues. What is your take on the rise of these kind of bills?
Any music scene is, in truth, multi-layered. A 19 year old might wanna catch the latest new acts around, but a 59 year old might be more comfortable watching a tribute to their favourite classic rock or punk act. It's important not to judge taste, and to cater for all. I've experienced criticism for "too many" tribute acts, but it usually comes from people who don't come to watch original acts anyway! All shows are a roll of the dice, and the stats suggest people come in pretty equal numbers to original nights and tributes. So I've no real problem with having a mixed programme. The issue is when you give up supporting original music in favour of the "quick buck" tribute night. That will be the end of live music, ultimately.

In an ideal world, if there were no barriers, what would you like to do with the Prince?
Don't start me on that, haha! More funding would mean we could do more things, have more creatives on board, different ideas leading to different types of events. But under this current unfunded, capitalist-based system in the UK, we have to soldier on and try our best to make ends meet. The mission is a successful, vibrant space for the community to enjoy, and to improve things incrementally.

What's coming next?
2025 is our busiest year to date. Circa 140 events in the venue room is a record. The autumn and winter programme is stacked as usual. Looking ahead to 2026 it kicks off with Independent Venue Week, and in March we'll have a special weekend of shows dedicated to our 10th anniversary.

https://www.theblackprincenn.com/

THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

Introverts dream big

photo Alex Botten

As is often the case, Introverts ended up with their understated-yet-absolutely-perfect name by accident. “Back in November, Alicija (bass) added us to a group chat to form a band and named it ‘Introverts’, and the name just stuck. I think we all liked it as it resembled us all, as we are very introverted sometimes in person,” explains lead guitarist, Reece. Drummer, Ash, picks up the theme, “A lot of people think that you need to be packed with confidence to be up on stage. But as the people we are, we have tended to keep to ourselves. We’ve always had a huge passion for music, and individually knew we wanted to be in a band when we grew up. It was hard finding people we felt comfortable with, but joining a college music course, we found our people, people who were similar to us. This made it a safe space for us. We know we are not the usual outgoing, extroverted band in front of others. People may doubt our potential, but we still do what we love and grow in confidence the more we perform and work together. We believe we shouldn’t be excluded from the music industry because of differences. This is why we are named ‘Introverts’.”

There can be a certain contradiction inherent in being in a band if you’re naturally introverted, people seem to assume you’re outgoing all the time, or can’t be introverted because you’re in a band. “Well, we are not the most outgoing group of people,” says vocalist Lily, “but that hasn’t seemed to affect us as a band. For me, it does make performing a harder challenge, but the more experienced I get, the easier it gets.” Alicija: “For me, having ADHD makes it difficult to deal with working in a band, things can get overwhelming quickly. However, having a good group of musicians working with you who are also your friends makes challenges much easier to deal with.”

Across the two performances A Void have seen, Introverts have noticeably grown in confidence. Their performance at the Lab was lovely, but there’s no denying the lack of movement on stage, a row of musicians ranged from Reece on the far left to rhythm guitarist Patryk on the right edge of the stage, barely even swaying to the sounds their instruments produced. Just a couple of months later, at the Roadmender, they were a different beast, with Reece pulling full-blown ‘axe hero’ poses, while Alicija provided strong backing vocals in support of Lily’s glacial lead, while Ash laid down a constant barrage of beats under Patryk’s ferocious rhythm playing. “Yeah,” says Reece, “I feel like my confidence has improved a lot on stage. Whenever I get on the stage now, my mind just stops and I vibe with the

music while I'm playing. Whereas, I never used to move a lot on stage when I first started doing gigs"

Are there any local bands you've particularly loved? "I'd say Take Me To The

Doctor," answers Ash, "I've seen them live a couple of times. They're an alternative grunge duo, a drummer and bassist who also sings. Despite only being a duo, they bring loads of energy through their music and have so much potential. That's what I like about them. I can see the passion they have for what they are doing on stage, and it's great. Also, their band name is probably one of the best I've heard!"

Clearly loving playing in the local scene, A Void wonders out loud what Introverts highlight has been so far? "Probably doing gigs at both the Lab and at the Roadmender as they were venues that I wanted to perform at, and it was just good to be able to experience what it was like gigging there", says Reece, obviously delighted that the band has played two such iconic Northampton venues one after the other.

And, despite their name, you couldn't accuse Introverts of lacking ambition. As well as the usual desire to record and play gigs, Lily has her eyes set on wider horizons, "I think it would be very cool in the distant future for us to be able to tour once we have built up a platform. I would love to travel and perform in different countries." Far from coming across as arrogant, this young band essentially saying they want to tour the world is utterly charming, and one would have to be an idiot to bet against it happening. "I think that would be a great experience for us", deadpans Lily, in an understatement so

spectacular it could only come from this group of quietly focused and determined introverts.

https://www.instagram.com/introvertsbandofficial/

Introverts play the Lab on the 19th of September.

Simon has an answer. "Good question that. Lingering and loitering in the melting pot. To be honest, we didn't think we'd be in this position again but here we are. I think the combined stresses of life and some personal issues made that hard but essentially myself and Ryan wanted the same thing, that was to continue making music. With the new addition of Titan, it seems now we are in a position to do just that with a bit more drive and elevation. We'll see how it goes, it's still early days but the general consensus is that it's very positive and we're all on the same page to make darker music with the same tongue in cheek aspect that we had before. So expect much of the same but with a new focus and drive."

https://www.instagram.com/candlesandcrayons/

As **Julius Seizure** bring their unique noise-rock to Northampton for the first time, we catch up with frontman Louis Gooding-Fair

What has your experience of playing live been like? You have any favourite gigs and any you'd like to forget?
So far my experience of playing live has been good. The best gig I've played was the Hideout in December last year. Due to last-minute illness, I was the headliner. I had time to interact and perform rather than feel like I am in the way. The crowd was great and I felt comfortable on stage for the first time. None that I would like to forget - yet.

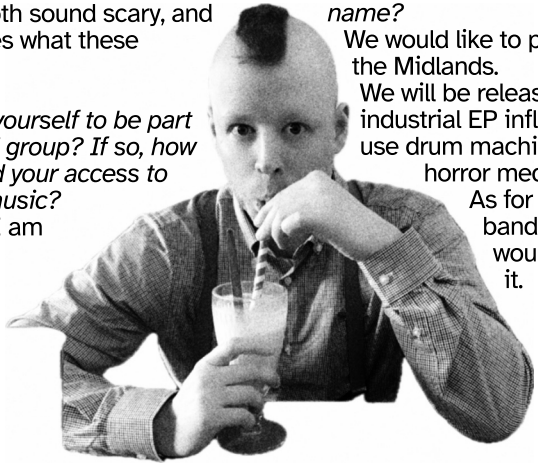
Who has influenced you?
Musically, bands like Sex Pistols, White Lies, A Place to Bury Strangers, Sisters of Mercy, Jesus and Mary Chain, The Cure and Big Black are my main influences. Nine Inch Nails, Velvet Underground and Link Wray are influences.

My mum influenced my singing style. She is from Essex, I picked up elements of her accent (mine is a strange mix of Suffolk and Essex), which influenced my cadences and wording, which is the most distinctive part of my sound - my voice and lyrics. Philosophy influences me too. I am interested in nihilism and existentialism. Both sound scary, and my music explores what these concepts mean.

Do you consider yourself to be part of a marginalised group? If so, how has this impacted your access to performing live music?
I am autistic, so I am marginalised. I struggle in social situations, such as mixing with new people, networking and being in noisy environments. These scenarios expose me to lots of sensory information for me to process. I mask in social situations which is tiring. Networking is necessary to get the music out and if I am too tired to do it, finding gigs is challenging.
Autism means I have a singular view of what my music needs to be, and I struggle to work with others. This means that the guitar/laptop set up works for me although it can appear as "karaoke".
I do everything myself, so between writing, recording, producing, marketing and booking gigs, that's a lot for anyone, let alone an autistic.

What's your proudest JC moment to date?
Being played on Spizzenergi's show. It's an honour that a first-wave punk act appreciated my song. Another moment would be being interviewed and playing my first headlining gig on the same night. It's the closest I've ever felt to being a rock star.

What would you like to happen next for Julius Seizure? And would you win a fight with the American band that has the same name?
We would like to play more gigs around the Midlands.
We will be releasing a new post-punk/industrial EP influenced by bands who use drum machines and by sci-fi horror media.
As for a fight with the other band, I used to wrestle, so I would make them work for it.



https://www.instagram.com/juliusseizureofficial

Fire Alarm: **Shooting at Fires** bow out (for now)

Live at Audioworks 16/08/2025

photo by alex botten

In the end, it was Shooting at Fires' Spinal Tap-esque ability to lose their drummers that saved them. A curse that saw the band with a last-second step-in from Bradley on the eve of the Solstice Festival, and he's pushed the previously wayward front three into a group that can play in time and (mostly) in key.

We're not going to lie, A Void had a certain amount of trepidation about Shooting At Fires' Audioworks showcase. They'd been chaotic fun when we put them on at the Lab in February, then a raging shitshow in clips from their Black Prince gig a month or so later (in fairness, mostly due to a drummer who was incapable of playing in time), and half and half at their rained-off Solstice set, and we simply didn't know which version we'd get. Thankfully, due in no small part to Bradley's influence, the SaF we got was, in the most, hugely improved.

Yes, there were moments where Harri's pitching became so untethered from what was going on with the rest of the band that we were reminded of some of Yoko Ono's more experimental moments, and yes, for sure, Isa needs to buy a guitar tuner, but those were outweighed by the parts that just worked.

The vocals, when Harri could hear what was going on, were remarkably similar to the low smoky jazz croon of Billie Holliday, the last thing we were expecting after previous gigs had showcased an often tuneless bellow. Other highlights were a couple of tracks where the band ditched the guitar altogether, with Sage and Bradley locking into a genuinely tight groove, while Harri delivered pitch-perfect vocals. The sparseness suited them, bring to mind some of Beck's less frantic moments and makes us wonder would would happen if they added synths for those songs.

In those numbers, Isa, dancing around the audience in a hat with ears that popped up and down to the beat, took on the role of a Bez-style mascot, and again it just worked. When Isa, back on guitar, got into her stride, her playing channelled the legendary Buzzard who scrawled noise-rock shredding across 'This Is the Day...This Is the Hour...This Is This!' by Pop Will Eat Itself. More of that, please.

Shooting at Fires have been through a lot in their short life, and have almost certainly been polarising when they've played, but on this showing, we can hand on heart say that they've got the potential to be great if they lean into their strengths and recognise where things need to be either reworked or ditched completely. This gig could have been a disaster, but they turned it into a triumph, and the quartet deserves congratulations for pulling it off.

The **Gonzo Experimental Band** were brilliant, then they suddenly vanished. Now 3/4 are back as **Oscillator**, so we ask...

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN??

"Well.. it all started when we had a bit of a line up change and didn't want to continue the 'Gonzo Experimental Band' without our old bassist.

So we retreated to our little home studio from January to June and decided to take the key elements of the sound we had before but putting them into the context of a three piece.

From then till now it's just been a process of getting the songs gig ready and creating a lot of the visual aspects to go along with the music!

As a band, we are really excited about the direction we are heading and we are really looking forward to getting back on the scene!"

*instagram.com/_oscillator_band_*

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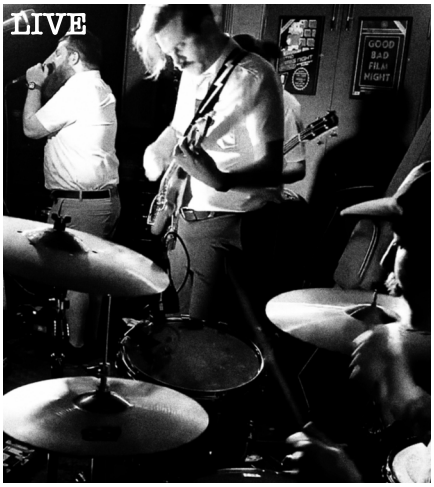
REVIEWS

We have a listen to new sounds from Shoetown artists & bands

LIVE



Utopia Development Corporation
Garibaldi, 01/08/2025

Utopia Development Corporation have always stood out to me in the Northampton music scene. Not only are they one of the first local bands I saw live, but they also inspired me to want to join a band and rock out all over Shoetown. When I heard they were playing at the Garibaldi, I knew I had to go. Of course, they did not disappoint.

Dressed like they're ready for another day in the office, their music is anything but corporate. Scorching guitar lines, thunderous basslines and drumming so aggressive that it sounds like the kit is getting beaten to death define the UDC sound. Dissonant flourishes showcase their mathcore influences, and their use of effects pedals creates a wall of sound so huge, it feels like you can drown in it. Lastly, the vocal delivery highlights the many real-world issues people are facing right now, and I cannot help but feel like the music talks to you this way.

UDC demonstrated that they are still a driving force in the Northampton music scene. They may have been out of action for a while, but their performances remain just as raw and powerful as ever. I look forward to seeing what they do next!
Louis Sefton

SINGLES

Venus Fly Trap 'Bebe'
(Glass Miniature)

What do you get if early Human League crashes into the Teletubbies theme? The answer is two minutes of charmingly wonky pop from Northampton institution Alex Novak and his band Venus Fly Trap. The whole thing is finished before you've had time to react to just how utterly peculiar it is. Other musicians moving into their third act would be content to play it safe, but not Alex Novak, and for that he must be roundly applauded.
https://glassminiature.bandcamp.com/album/bebe

Lame 'Love at First Light'

Once upon a time 'indie' meant anything from Ned's Atomic Dustbin to Loop to The La's. Gradually, it came to mean a kind of vaguely melodic, inoffensive, middle of the road ladrock, the type that would make Oasis look edgy. Lame's latest is perfectly pleasant in an Ed Sheeran meets Keane kind of way, but is that enough? Their busy gigs would indicate it probably is, so what do we know.
https://lameforever.bandcamp.com/track/love-at-first-light

Killer Saucers From Hell 'What's Next?'

Punchy sci-fi themed surf rock from Northampton's second best dressed group (Utopia Development Corporation take the top spot). 'What's Next?' captures the excitement of the band's live shows, and sounds unlike anyone else in the local scene. Their commitment to 50's styled space inspired rock is to be commended.
https://www.instagram.com/killer_saucers_from_hell/

Stereo Causes 'Psychodelic'

If Stereo Causes frontman Jake Sawyer could be anyone else, we're sure he'd pick Kurt Cobain. While their new single may not get quite as close to straight up copying as 'Leave Me Be' did with 'Polly', there is still a mighty hat-doff to Seattle's favourite sons. However, 'Psychodelic' shows a band in transition, moving away from near tribute and hinting at finding their own sound. It's a promising direction.
https://www.hopp.bio/stereocauses

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Maevis Darkhorse on **Delia Derbyshire**

September 1998. Outside a terraced house on Cambridge Street in Semilong, Northampton. A young man wearing shades knocks on the front door. He is here to visit an ailing, elderly lady. But he is neither family nor health care professional. In fact he is an ex spaceman. But his business here is neither social nor astronautical. He is here to interview Delia Derbyshire, legendary pioneer of electronic music.

From the early 60's, when she wormed her way into the BBC radiophonic workshop (against all odds), until she moved to Northampton in 1980, Delia had been a major player in the developing electronic music world, with ground-breaking techniques & a hugely imaginative approach to sound capture and processing, that resulted in a catalogue of original work for radio, theatre, television and film, and collaborations with and admiration from some of the music world's big hitters. Although at the time she didn't become a household name, within the BBC she was lauded as an innovator. But this wasn't reflected in terms of credit for her work or career advancement. Despite this, she was appreciated by the likes of Paul McCartney, Jimi Hendrix and Brian Jones. She collaborated with Anthony Newley, Yoko Ono and Peter Zinovieff. Those who followed in her footsteps in electronic music, cite her as a major influence – Chemical Brothers, Aphex Twin, Orbital and Portishead.

The BBC Radiophonic Workshop

Of course I have to talk about her most famous work, the one that everyone will have heard of, even if they have no interest in electronica: her arrangement for the theme tune for "Doctor Who" (created in 1963). It is an extraordinarily dramatic piece of music, overly-exciting, bordering on disturbing (for a 5 year old). The galloping, twangy, distorted bass intro sets the tempo, and creates a sense of being on a mission as it crops up throughout the piece. It alternates with one of the most beautiful, ethereal synth pieces I have ever heard, as we escape boring, earthbound shizzle and project off to...anywhere else in the Universe. But hang on; it isn't a synth. She didn't have a synthesiser; she achieved this by splicing bits of tape together (recordings from oscillators and hand made sound effects); layer upon layer of spliced tape that had to be played individually AND simultaneously in order to record the whole piece onto a master tape. This is akin to creating your own tools from scratch in order to do a job...because those tools don't exist yet. Wow...just wow. Because some of the sources of the sound are created from real objects, there is a fabulous timbre and authenticity to the sound, not at all sterile and lifeless like some later, digitally produced electronica. The music cranks up the expectation and sets the scene, to herald the abrupt arrival of the mysterious, charismatic Time Lord in his rattly blue box. Can anyone imagine Doctor Who beginning in any other way? And how much did this iconic theme tune contribute to the identity and success of the programme, which has now been running for 60 odd years? Is it as important as the Daleks...the Cybermen...jelly babies?? Go discuss. Years later, when I was learning to play the saw, this was one of the go-to pieces, to attempt to play along to. Finally, it's in the key of E minor. Enough said.

Much is made of Delia's decline into alcoholism and it is often reported that she lost her passion for music during the last years of her life. This is not entirely true. Delia had been kicked around by the BBC and didn't fit into the commercial music world. But she still worked away, at her home in Cambridge Street, largely on her own, without releasing much of it. And then Pete Kember (formerly of Spacemen 3, now Sonic Boom) showed up, to interview her for Surface magazine, and to try and persuade her to work with him on new material. Sadly Delia's health was declining fast, so their time working together was limited.

After her death, in 2001, a vast collection of tapes was found in the attic of her house. Thankfully there now exists "Delia Derbyshire Day" – an archival project in Manchester, which has catalogued and publicised her work. Finally her genius is recognized; taught as part of the curricula in music colleges, Delia Derbyshire is the Godmother Of Electronica.

NB: I asked Pete Kember if Delia Derbyshire's small-from-the-outside terraced house in Northampton was, in fact, exceptionally and surprisingly spacious on the inside...something like a tardis?
He said no, it wasn't.

Bollocks at the Back

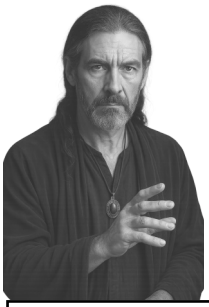
A Rhapsodic Eruption of Mancunian Majesty: Oasis Live, an Orchestration of Sonic Gobsmacker

Nix Nene Writes

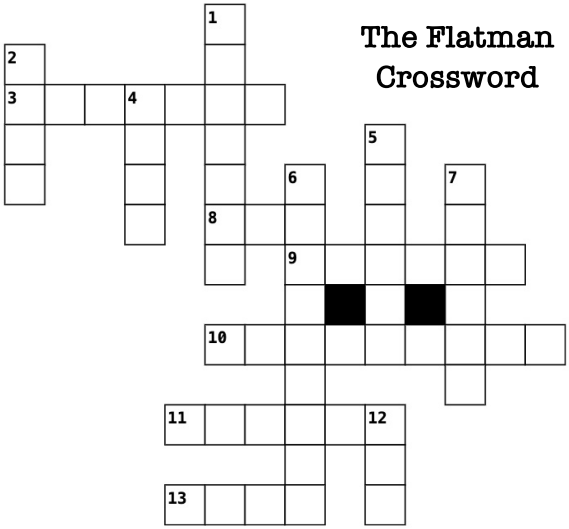
Attending an Oasis concert is not merely an auditory experience—it is a transcendental chronogasm, a kaleidoscopic implosion of illicit bravado that penetrates the very marrow of one's epistemological spleen. It is not music. It is cosmic nectar filtered through the divine tea strainer of the Gallagher brothers' northern esoterica, reigning down upon the prostate masses like an avalanche of lamentable enlightenment.

From the moment Liam Gallagher swaggered onto the stage, a deity in parka and sneer, the atmosphere became electrically photosynthetic. His voice—nasal, combative, and marinated in 100-proof attitude—wafted over the crow like a bar fight in a cathedral. Each syllable was a velvet punch, each lyric a call to transcend the dreary banalities of existence and ascend into a higher realm of controversial Britpop ecstasy.

Noel Gallagher, the six-stringed oracle himself, summoned riffs (cont. pg 1994)



The Flatman Crossword



Across

3. 80's band that command a little respect (7)

8. Sonic Youth's sticky LP (3)

9. David Bowie LP shares a living space (6)

10. The Fall pay tribute to a fashionable clergyman (3,6)

11. Viagra Boys tune denounces competitive activity (6)

13. MGMT's tribute to young goats (4)

Down

1. Shirley Manson's rubbish band (7)

2. Band that sang,"Life is good/And I feel great/'Cause mother says I was/A great mistake"(4)

4. Bernard Butlers hit single isn't going anywhere (4)

5. Blur's succulent hit single (6)

6. All that's left after Courtney Love dismembers children's figurines (4,5)

7. A Ramone so good they name him twice (3,3)

12. ABBA are in peril again (1,1,1)

A Void Disaster with our Monthly Horoscopes by

Terry Kinesis

Aries (March 21- Apr 20) Toot Toot! The Venga Bus is coming, and you're going to eat pizza, or go to Ibiza... the tea leaves are unsure.

Taurus (Apr 21- May 21) Be careful when out walking, as the question 'What's she going to look like with a chimney on her?' could be about you..

Gemini (May 22 – June 21) You're only human, of flesh and blood you're made, but be aware, while you were away your better half was also human.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22) Get yourself to suburbia, those dogs want to run with you tonight. Your lucky hat is a cone.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22) Too shy shy? Hush hushed, eye to eye? Watch out for Kajavoodoo in your Kajagoogoo, when in the lion's mouth.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22) Exercise caution at the start of the week, lest you fall apart. Thursdays hold a risk of never looking back. The weekend will bring a new relationship which will cause both local ghosts & footware to elevate.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22) Usually, you can't hurry love, no, you just have to wait; however, this month, Gabriel is rising in Genesis, and speed can be achieved.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21) Everyday will be like Sunday, boring and grey. Be careful that you don't swerve to the right and lose all good will.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21) When you need to log into a Teams call, you'll find your colleagues in Huddle Formation discussing a strike. Watch out for Thunder and Lightning.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 20) Sheeran has been seen in these parts, with his nylon-strung weapon of woe. Be prepared.

Aquarius (Jan 21 – Feb 19) You will find yourself on the actual beach The Stranglers immortalised. Look out for the Peach grove nearby.

Pisces (Feb 20 – March 20) An accidental mirror-glimpse will cause a moment of 'guitar too high' realisation. Lengthen that strap to avoid censure from Nordic wolves.

Want to play one of our shows? Drop us a line at https://linktr.ee/avoidcollective